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SUBJECT: ARGENTINE SUPPORT FOR OCTOBER 2008 FATF STATEMENTS
ON IRAN

REF: STATE 115523

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas P. Kelly For Reasons 1.4 (B and D).

1. (C) EconOff delivered reftel demarche November 7, 2008, to GoA National Coordinator for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism finance Alejandro Strega. Strega, who reports to Argentina's Minister of Justice Anibal Fernandez, is Argentina's representative to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). He attended the mid-October FATF meeting in Brazil, and is the person responsible for coordinating the GoA's effort to implement FATF's recommended actions with regards to Iran.

2. (C) Strega admitted that neither he nor anyone else in the GoA or Central Bank (BCRA) has had time to focus on this yet (mostly due to his busy travel schedule). He noted that following the February 2008 FATF statement noting money laundering/terrorism finance risks posed by Iran and five other countries, the BCRA issued a circular to all financial institutions repeating the FATF announcement and warnings. Therefore, he assumed the BCRA and maybe the GoA would be amenable to taking some kind of action in response to the latest FATF recommendations, although he did not feel comfortable commenting on which if any of the measures mentioned reftel the GoA and BCRA might be able to impose.

3. (C) Strega agreed to discuss this with both Zenon Biagosch, Vice Superintendent of Banks, and with the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Legal Advisor, Susana Ruiz Cerruti. (Strega commented that it was Cerruti who gave him instructions to support the consensus position on Iran at the October FATF meeting.) Post will follow-up directly with the Biagosch and Cerruti, and will also meet with appropriate officials within the Economy Ministry. Once we have a better understanding of what Strega and others are planning, the Embassy will raise this at a higher level in the BCRA and Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Economy.
KELLY